

## Public Notice – Environmental Project

### PURPOSE OF NOTICE:

The Department of Environmental Quality seeks public comment on the state's response to the environmental aspects of a proposed action in Virginia coastal waters.

### PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:

September 18, 2012 to October 16, 2012

### TYPE OF RESPONSE:

Federal Consistency Determination

DEQ is reviewing a proposed federal action to determine if it is consistent with the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program (VCP) established pursuant to the U.S. Coastal Zone Management Act. The VCP seeks to protect the quality of air, water or other natural resources in Virginia's coastal area.

### NAME OF AGENCY PROPOSING THE PROJECT:

DOC/NOAA/National Marine Fisheries Service

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) proposes to implement Amendment 19 to the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan (FMP) which updates the small-mesh multispecies fishery. The purpose of the amendment is to establish and implement Annual Catch Limits (ACLs) and Accountability Measures (AMs) to bring management of the small-mesh fishery into compliance with the re-authorized Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act. The proposed action includes the following management measures: (1) new overfishing definitions and reference points recommended by the Stock Assessment Workshop (SAW51); (2) three-year specifications; (3) annual monitoring reports to be prepared by NMFS and reviewed by the Whiting Plan Development Team (PDT); (4) weekly vessel trip report (VTR) reporting by vessels landing small-mesh multispecies to assign catch to the correct stock area; (5) stock-wide annual total allowable landings (TALs) for the northern stock area; (6) stock-wide annual TALs for the southern area, with quarterly allocations implemented in the second year after landings exceed 2/3rds of the TAL; (7) in-season AMs that become effective when landings are greater than 90% of a stock's TAL (400 pounds (lbs.) red hake incidental possession limit and 2,000 lbs. silver hake incidental possession limit); (8) a post-season AM that reduces the 90% TAL trigger if catch exceeds the ACL; (9) a 5,000 lb. red hake year round possession limit in all areas; and (10) an increase of the year round southern whiting possession limit from 30,000 to 40,000 lbs. for vessels using trawls having 3-inch or larger mesh. The NMFS has submitted a Federal Consistency Determination that finds the proposed action consistent, to the maximum extent practicable, with the enforceable policies of the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program.

### HOW TO COMMENT:

DEQ accepts comments from the public by e-mail, fax or postal mail. All comments must include the name, address and telephone number of the person commenting and be received by DEQ within the comment period. The public may review the project documents at DEQ's central office in Richmond.

### CONTACT FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS, DOCUMENT REQUESTS AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

NAME; John E. Fisher  
DEQ Central Office  
Office of Environmental Impact Review  
629 East Main Street, Room 633  
Richmond, Virginia, 23219;

Phone: (804) 698-4339

Fax: (804) 698-4319

E-mail: [john.fisher@deq.virginia.gov](mailto:john.fisher@deq.virginia.gov)